

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1-34 (canceled).

Claim 35 (currently amended): A method of improving or maintaining absorption of vitamin E in a pet animal, the method comprising the step of feeding the pet an effective sufficient amount of an edible composition that affects to improve or maintain or promote the pet's lipid absorption capacity, the edible composition comprising a component selected from the group consisting of a pancreatic function-promoter, a liver function-promoter, and an intestinal mucosa function-promoter, wherein the liver function-promoter comprises between about 0.1% and about 1% by weight of the edible composition on a dry matter basis and the intestinal mucosa function-promoter comprises between about 0.1% and 20% by weight of the edible composition on a dry matter basis.

Claim 36 (canceled).

Claim 37 (previously presented): A method according to claim 36 wherein the pancreatic function-promoter comprises a component selected from the group consisting of a lipase, a gut pH modifier and a pancreatic lipase.

Claim 38 (previously presented): A method according to claim 37 wherein the gut pH modifier is selected from the group consisting of an acidifier, an alkalanizer, a buffer, a prebiotic and a probiotic micro-organism.

Claim 39 (previously presented): A method according to claim 36 wherein the liver function-promoter is selected from the group consisting of taurine, emulsifiers, vitamins, minerals, glutathione and glutathione promoters, and combinations thereof.

Claim 40 (previously presented): A method according to claim 36 wherein the liver function-promoter is a nutrient that increases endogenous glutathione after ingestion.

Claim 41 (previously presented): A method according to claim 36 wherein the intestinal mucosa function promoter includes a component selected from the group consisting of a fat transportation aid, agent and carrier.

Claim 42 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41 wherein the component is selected from the group consisting of whey protein and proteases having the capacity to promote the formation of lipoproteins.

Claim 43 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41 wherein the intestinal mucosa function-promoter is selected from the group consisting of an anti-inflammatory agent, lactoferrin, a prebiotic and a probiotic micro-organism.

Claim 44 (previously presented): A method according to claim 43 wherein the anti-inflammatory agent is an omega-3 fatty acid.

Claim 45 (previously presented): A method according to claim 41 wherein the component has a fatty acid profile selected to improve intestinal absorption.

Claim 46 (previously presented): A method according to claim 45 wherein the fatty acid profile is of a medium chain triglyceride.

Claim 47 (previously presented): A method according to claim 45 wherein the component comprises whey protein.

Claim 48 (previously presented): A method according to claim 35 wherein the composition is administered as a nutritionally balanced, ready-to-eat meal.

Claim 49 (previously presented): A method according to claim 48 wherein the meal comprises a dried pet food kibble.

Claim 50 (previously presented): A method according to claim 35 wherein the composition is administered as a meal supplement.

Claim 51 (previously presented): A method according to claim 50 wherein the meal supplement is in the form of a treat.

Claim 52 (currently amended): A method of maintaining or improving the serum vitamin E level in a pet animal comprising the step of feeding the pet animal an effective amount of an edible composition that maintains or improves the pet's lipid absorption capacity, the edible composition comprising ~~a component selected from the group consisting of a pancreatic function-promoter, a liver function-promoter, and an intestinal mucosa function-promoter,~~ wherein the liver function-promoter comprises between about 0.1% and about 1% by weight of the edible composition on a dry matter basis and the intestinal mucosa function-promoter comprises between about 0.1% and 20% by weight of the edible composition on a dry matter basis.

Claim 53 (canceled).

Claim 54 (previously presented): A method according to claim 53 wherein the pancreatic function-promoter comprises a component selected from the group consisting of lipase, a gut pH modifier and a pancreatic extract.

Claim 55 (previously presented): A method according to claim 53 wherein the liver function-promoter is selected from the group consisting of taurine, emulsifiers, vitamins, minerals, glutathione and glutathione promoters, and combinations thereof.

Claim 56 (previously presented): A method according to claim 53 wherein the intestinal mucosa function promoter includes a component selected from the group consisting of a fat transportation aid, agent and carrier.

Claim 57 (previously presented): A method according to claim 53 wherein the component has a fatty acid profile selected to improve intestinal absorption.

Claim 58 (previously presented): A method according to claim 52 wherein the composition is administered as a nutritionally balanced, ready-to-eat meal.

Claim 59 (previously presented): A method according to claim 58 wherein the meal comprises a dried pet food kibble.

Claim 60 (previously presented): A method according to claim 58 wherein the meal is administered daily.

Claim 61 (currently amended): A composition comprising a ~~component selected from the group consisting of~~ pancreatic function promoters, a liver function-promoters, and an intestinal mucosa function promoters ~~and combinations thereof~~, in ~~an~~ amounts effective to promote or maintain or improve the lipid absorption capacity of ~~the said a~~ pet, wherein the liver function promoter comprises between about 0.1% and about 1% by weight of the composition on a dry matter basis and the intestinal mucosa function promoter comprises between about 0.1% and 20% by weight of the composition on a dry matter basis.

Claim 62 (previously presented): The composition of claim 61 wherein the composition is a nutritionally balanced, ready-to-eat pet meal.

Claim 63 (previously presented): The composition of claim 62 wherein the meal is a wet pet food.

Claim 64 (previously presented): The composition of claim 62 wherein the meal is a dry pet food.

Claim 65 (previously presented): The composition of claim 61 wherein the liver function promoter is lecithin.

Claim 66 (previously presented): The composition of claim 65 wherein the lecithin is obtained from a source selected from the group consisting of soya, sunflower oil, wheat germ, egg, avocado and combinations thereof.

Claim 67 (currently amended): A method of improving the appearance of a pet comprising the step of increasing a pet's serum vitamin E level by feeding the pet a diet that maintains or improves the pet's lipid absorption capacity and comprises ~~an agent selected from the group consisting of~~ a fat emulsifier or fat emulsification system, a fat transportation agent, and an acidifying agent ~~and combinations thereof~~.

Claim 68 (previously presented): A method according to claim 67 wherein the fat transportation agent comprises whey protein.